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THE ADVANCE OF MARY G. MACOMBER

by D. C. P.

A NOTABLE painting was unveiled some months ago in the reading room of the fine public library at Fall River, Massachusetts. "Memory Comforting Sorrow" is the title of the composition, which is from the brush of Miss Mary L. Macomber, a native of Fall River who now resides in Boston. Two figures are seen: Sorrow, with bowed head, and Memory leaning toward her, lightly touching the strings of her harp in an effort to revive the stricken spirit. It is a work which fully demonstrates the painstaking care which the artist bestows on her canvases.

"The Little Sister," which is reproduced here, is a work of the same style of careful workmanship. It has the charm of elegance, and most delicate touches, yet it is wholly free from sentimentality. Of like character is her "Stella Maris," concerning which a critic wrote: "In this age of realism run mad, as it were, it is to such artists as Miss Macomber that one must look, to uphold the old



"Stella Maris"

ideals and traditions. Here is a type of art almost mediæval in its intense devotional aspect and its fervent richness of color; it is modern only in its technique. That she has never been outside of her own state is difficult to believe, when confronted by these pictures which remind one of the Italian primitives." The faces are like those in all her symbolic compositions. At first glance they may seem hopelessly calm and placid, yet, if we examine them closely, we see that there is not one that does not possess a certain play of features. This placidity does not indicate stolidity, or impassiveness, but serenity of soul and a delightful sense of repose—yea, the least emotion has left its mark and the slightest transition of thought is indicated by the exquisite touch which vitalizes the features. The artist's style, which always was refined without being cold, has not deteriorated into finicky minuteness.

And yet, there was in Miss Macomber's work, up to a few years ago, a suggestion of excessive painstaking. The perfected



"The Little Sister"

The Advance of Mary G. Macomber



"Pharaoh's Daughter"

result hinted at a weary round of furbishing, a halting—a "stammering" let me call it—which consisted in turning large

ideas into familiar symbols and then clothing them with a pictorial finesse that often goes with immaturity of knowledge—paradoxical as it may sound. For the most highly finished work is not the perfection of art; it smacks too much of the photographic detail of the copyist. The greater talent is shown in the strong conception, the broad planes, the blocking of light and shade—by suggestion, rather than completion.

This artist, however, has greatly developed, as may be seen in her "Pharaoh's Daughter." She was heretofore careful in her brushwork, smooth and labored. Now she has become facile, free; as broad and as bold as her subject admits. It is the grand style on a small scale. Now we see her engaged in building up a structure of line, of mass, and of rhythmical lights and shadows which end in unity. Her work is becoming noteworthy.

Little need be said about her personality, which is charming and reserved. Happy the artist whose story is written in his work alone! These are the true memories of life, and with Miss Macomber they express the loftiest feelings, the flowers of thought.

Editor's Note.—The reproductions of Miss Macomber's paintings which accompany this article are used by permission of Mr. R. C. Vose, of Boston.

The Jew in Art.

Since Cromwell's edict of tolerance there has been a steady invasion of England by the Hebrews, and we probably owe a great deal more to them intellectually and artistically than they are themselves aware or than we are ever willing to admit. One of the terrible and debasing qualities of the English is a Puritanism which, needless to say, has nothing in common with the noble Puritanism either of the cloister or the Eastern desert. Cromwell, who invited the Jews to England entirely for financial reasons

(he was our greatest economist), had no conception that he was introducing a wholesome antidote to the detestable movement in which he and Milton are the atoning spirits. Where there are Hebrews there is no Puritanism. They have always been the *brocanteurs* of *virtu* because of their Oriental love of precious and splendid objects, quite apart from the exaggerated monetary value which has been placed on such things, it should be remembered, by Christian critics and Christian connoisseurs.